

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Hindsford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Atherton

Lodge Road
Atherton
Manchester
M46 9BL

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Wigan

Dates of inspection: 4th March 2008

Date of last inspection: 11th to 14th February 2003

School's unique reference number: 106441

Headteacher: Mrs L Apps

Inspector's name and number: Mr G Yates, SIAS 430

School context

The school is an average size primary school with pupils aged from 4 to 11 years. Most children come from the immediate area which is just outside the centre of Atherton. The church is some distance away from the school. Some very good modifications have been made to the school buildings and grounds. The school has recently admitted a number of pupils from a closing school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hindsford school as a Church school are good

The school successfully meets what it sets out to do in providing a good education in a Christian context. All aspects of school life are valued highly by the pupils and the school's Christian ethos is very strong. As a result, pupils achieve well both in the development of personal skills and also of academic skills.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian leadership from the headteacher, vicar, other ministers and Foundation governors.
- The school's welcoming ethos that manifests itself in happy, polite and friendly children within a very caring Christian community.
- Pupils' very responsible behaviour as a result of the well planned opportunities provided for them to take on responsibilities around the school.

Focus for development

- The school should explore ways of formalising evaluation procedures to ensure it continues to provide a good quality of Christian education.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

There is a distinctive Christian ethos that is evident in the way everyone is treated. Rules are understood by all and are consistently but fairly applied by the staff. Throughout the school there are many very good examples demonstrating that 'Every Child Matters' is high on the school agenda. For example, the school has its own trim trail to help develop pupils' awareness of the importance of healthy exercise. The caring and sharing attitude of pupils reflects fully the school's Christian values. Pupils are rightly proud of the school. They talk with tremendous enthusiasm, for example, when using a power point presentation to explain the many things the school does. They are valued as individuals and as a result, they respond well to everything the school has to offer. Pupils receive an excellent level of care that enables them to develop high levels of self-esteem. When asked how he enjoyed school, one pupil replied promptly "I have been to three different schools and this one is the best, everything is good here!" Pupils are very polite, get on very well with each other and have a

strong sense of citizenship and of care for others less well off than themselves. For example they have raised money for local charities. Pupils are proud to be School Council members, Problem Solvers, playground buddies and Eco group members. Most of all they like having a say in 'their' school. The link with the local church is very good and enhances pupils' spiritual development outstandingly well. Through lessons in religious education and multi-cultural days, pupils learn well about world religions and of cultures different from their own. However more needs be done to improve their knowledge of life in multi-cultural Great Britain.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Christian worship is at the heart of the school's Christian ethos. 'I like assembly time because we are all together', said by one pupil, was echoed by others. The daily act of worship, whether it be whole school worship or class worship is the focal point of each day not just for the children but also for the staff. Older pupils are made well aware of Anglican traditions by taking part in a Holy Communion service every month and by talking to the vicar as part of his weekly visit to school. All pupils experience collective worship that is very securely focused on Christian values both in school and in church. During the inspection the worship was led by an Elder from a local Independent Methodist Church. It was of an exceptionally high quality, spiritually uplifting for all present and had a distinct Christian message. Pupils enjoyed singing Christian hymns and did so with great gusto. The involvement of church representatives not only in leading worship but in many other aspects of school life is a major strength. Pupils help to lead worship effectively. For example, parents said how well one age group of pupils had led the Mothers' Day service. One parent commented, 'It made me laugh and cry!' Reflection is a major strength of the school and contributes to the calm atmosphere. Very good use is made of prayers at the start and end of the day. Learning in religious education is effectively reflected in acts of worship by the accurate answers pupils provide about biblical topics. Worship is planned for very well. The school evaluates informally the distinctiveness of worship but recognises the need to formalise procedures, to ensure it continues to fully reflect the school's aims.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good.

The Christian ethos of the school is kept very much to the fore. Relationships within the staff team and with pupils are outstanding and a key feature in the school's extremely happy and caring community. The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide effective leadership and work in close partnership with the church. The vicar and other ministers inspire pupils and are instrumental in the very good promotion of the Christian character of the school. The headteacher is a very strong leader and has ensured that the school's mission statement with regard to its status as a church school is met in full. She provides strong Christian leadership and is very well supported by the pastoral officer and worship co-ordinator. The recent integration of pupils from a closing school into the Hindsford community has been managed very well. The good academic quality of the school has been recognized fully by Ofsted. The school currently does not make use of the Church school monitoring kit to evaluate its provision. It has very good systems in place to evaluate most aspects of school life but has yet to formalize its evaluation of itself as a Church School. The regular contact between the headteacher and the clergy demonstrates clearly the importance that is attached to the school's Church School status. The foundation governors understand and carry out their role well in maintaining and promoting the Christian identity of the school. Christian symbols are in evidence throughout the school. For example, a large colourful display linked to Easter celebration is there for all too see in the hall. The school improvement plan includes a clear and definitive reference to church links.